UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

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6 July 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-third session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME 1996-2005

Letter dated 5 June 1998 from the representatives of China, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly an item entitled "World Solar Programme 1996-2005".

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, adopted a programme entitled Agenda 21, which drew international attention, inter alia, to the unsustainable pattern of energy production and consumption and to the need for humankind to rely increasingly on environmentally sound energy systems, particularly new and renewable sources of energy.

As a follow-up to UNCED, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), together with several partners within and outside the United Nations system, initiated a process for the promotion, development and dissemination of the Solar Programme covering the decade 1996-2005. This Programme was approved in June 1997 by the World Solar Commission, a body composed of 18 heads of State and Government, chaired by His Excellency Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its nineteenth special session, held in June 1997, reviewed the progress made over the five years that have passed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and adopted a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (document A/S-19/29 of 27 June 1997). In the section on energy of this Programme, the

need for promoting efforts in research on and development and use of renewable energy technologies at the international and national levels is expressly recognized. This is precisely the overall objective of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, which is an instrument at the service of the world community for the promotion, development and deployment of renewable energy technologies as a major contribution to sustainable development. Consequently, the full involvement of all actors concerned - national Governments, international organizations, academic and research institutions, banks and other financial entities, non-governmental organizations, industries, etc. - is essential in order to ensure the successful implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.

The General Conference of UNESCO adopted at its twenty-ninth session (November 1997) a resolution calling, inter alia, upon all UNESCO member States to contribute to the success of the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.

We believe that the time has now come for the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a similar resolution in support of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 and propose that consideration of the new agenda item and the related draft resolution take place in plenary meetings of the fifty-third session.

An explanatory memorandum is annexed to the present letter, in accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (see annex).

(Signed) Mr. Qin HUASUN
Permanent Representative of the
People's Republic of China
to the United Nations

(Signed) Dr. Makarim WIBISONO
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Indonesia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Dr. Dore GOLD
Permanent Representative
of Israel to the United Nations

(Signed) Ms. M. Patricia DURRANT
Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. HASMY Agam
Permanent Representative
of Malaysia to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Joseph DIATTA
Permanent Representative
of Niger to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Ahmad KAMAL
Permanent Representative
of Pakistan to the United Nations

(Signed) M. Ibra Deguene KA
Permanent Representative
of Senegal to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Khiphusizi J. JELE
Permanent Representative
of South Africa to the United Nations

(Signed) M. Ali HACHANI
Permanent Representative
of Tunisia to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Machivenyika Tobias MAPURANGA
Permanent Representative
of Zimbabwe to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Kamalesh SHARMA
Permanent Representative
of India to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Peter P. CHKHEIDZE
Permanent Representative
of Georgia to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Francesco Paolo FULCI
Permanent Representative
of Italy to the United Nations

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, a high-level expert meeting "The Sun in the Service of Mankind" was held in Paris, at the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in broad partnership with major relevant institutions, among which were the European Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. This meeting recommended that, in order to give a strong political impulse to the development of renewable energies, a three-year campaign entitled "World Solar Summit Process" should be undertaken, leading to the organization of a World Solar Summit at the highest possible level. A World Solar Commission, chaired by His Excellency President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and composed of 17 heads of State and Government was established in 1994 to oversee and guide this preparatory process.

The World Solar Summit was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 16 and 17 September 1996, with the following results:

(a) Adoption of the Harare Declaration on Solar Energy and Sustainable Development;

(b) Approval of the outline of a 10-year programme for the promotion of renewable energies;

(c) Launching of the preparation of a World Solar Programme 1996-2005, to be completed within a nine-month period.

The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 was approved by the World Solar Commission at its second session held in New York on 23 June 1997, on the occasion of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 five years after UNCED.

During the preparatory process leading to the Summit, the Director-General of UNESCO systematically reported to the Secretary-General and to the Executive Heads of the United Nations specialized agencies and programmes concerned on the progress made, calling upon their partnership. On 7 September 1995, in reply to a letter from the Director-General of UNESCO, the Secretary-General noted the pursuit of this UNESCO initiative as an integral part of the follow-up to Agenda 21, which emphasized the crucial role of energy in economic and social development, and welcomed the development and implementation of the programme as a joint, system-wide effort. The Secretary-General ended his letter with the following words: "By focusing on the transfer and sharing of knowledge in the development of renewable energy technologies, the World Solar Summit process can make a distinct contribution to the work of the United Nations and the system as a whole in support of sustainable development". Following the successful conclusion of the World Solar Summit, the Director-General of UNESCO officially informed the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the concerned agencies

and programmes of the United Nations system, of the results of the Summit. In his reply of 21 November 1996, the Secretary-General stated that "The Harare Declaration on Solar Energy and Sustainable Development, as well as the outline of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 approved by the Summit, represent a high degree of political commitment, which is an essential requirement to address the difficult issue of energy supplies in a manner consistent with sustainable development".

In October 1996, a representative of the Director-General of UNESCO briefed delegations attending the fifty-first session of the General Assembly on the results of the World Solar Summit and reported officially thereon to the Second Committee of the General Assembly during its examination of the item on sustainable development. The Harare Declaration on Solar Energy and Sustainable Development, the outline of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 and the text of the World Solar Programme itself were distributed as information documents during the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.

The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (see A/C.2/51/5) was prepared, taking as a basis the outline approved by the World Solar Summit and the commitments made in the Harare Declaration on Solar Energy and Sustainable Development. It contains a series of recommendations for actions to be taken at the national and international levels in order to attain the objectives resulting from the above-mentioned commitments. The Programme also includes global, regional and national renewable energy projects to be implemented as a joint effort of the organizations and programmes concerned of the United Nations system, other international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, academic and research institutions, financing entities, industries and the private sector. Implementation of a number of the 300-odd high-priority national projects is already under way; as of 30 April 1998, the projects being implemented with international financial assistance amounted to a total of $400 million. In addition to that, a number of other national projects are being implemented with national funding only, both public and private. This indicates clearly that the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 functions as it was conceived, namely, as an action-oriented instrument at the service of the international community for the promotion of renewable, environmentally friendly energies, in the interests of industrialized and developing countries alike. Following the resolution adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, endorsement of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 by the General Assembly would constitute a major contribution to its successful implementation and a recognition of the work of the World Solar Commission for the promotion of renewable energies.

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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to request you, pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-third regular session of the General Assembly an item entitled "Observer status for the Association of Caribbean States in the General Assembly". Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we attach an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II).

(Signed) Mr. John William ASHE
Chargé d'affaires of the
Permanent Mission of Antigua and
Barbuda to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Carlston B. BOUCHER
Permanent Representative
of Barbados to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Maurice MOORE
Permanent Representative
of the Bahamas to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Alfonso GAHONA
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Belize
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Andelfo J. GARCIA
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Colombia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Bruno RODRÍGUEZ-PARRILLA
Permanent Representative
of Cuba to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Luis LITHGOW
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the Dominican
Republic to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Julio Armando MARTINI HERRERA
Permanent Representative of Guatemala
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Robert MILLETTE
Permanent Representative
of Grenada to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Hugo NOÉ-PINO
Permanent Representative
of Honduras to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Emanuel TELLO
Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Aquilino BOYD
Permanent Representative
of Panama to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Herbert G. V. YOUNG
Permanent Representative of Saint
Vincent and the Grenadines to the
United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Michel Orlando KERPENS
Chargé d'affaires of the
Permanent Mission of Suriname
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Norman M. MONAGAS-LESSEUR
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Venezuela
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Fernando BERROCAL SOTO
Permanent Representative
of Costa Rica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Simon Paul RICHARDS
Permanent Representative
of Dominica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Ricardo CASTANEDA-CORNEJO
Permanent Representative
of El Salvador to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Samuel INSANALLY
Permanent Representative
of Guyana to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Pierre LELONG
Permanent Representative
of Haiti to the United Nations

(Signed) Miss M. Patricia DURRANT
Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Enrique PAGUAGUA FERNÁNDEZ
Permanent Representative
of Nicaragua to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Kevin ISAAC
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of St. Kitts
and Nevis to the United Nations

(Signed) Ms. Sonia R. LEONCE
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. George William MCKENZIE
Permanent Representative of Trinidad
and Tobago to the United Nations

ANNEX I

[Original: English and Spanish]

Explanatory memorandum

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) came into being on 4 August 1995, date of the entry into force of the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States, which had been adopted at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 24 July 1994. The members of ACS are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

In addition, France (in respect of French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique) and the Netherlands Antilles have joined the Association as associate members. Participation in this capacity is open to Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

Observer status has been granted to Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Italy, the Netherlands (in respect of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba), Morocco, Peru, the Russian Federation and Spain.

The following regional organizations have been granted the status of founding observers of the ACS: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Latin American Economic System (SELA), and the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA). The Convention also provides for participation by social actors.

In accordance with article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention was registered with the United Nations Secretariat on 1 November 1995.

The basic purposes of the ACS are to facilitate consultation, cooperation and concerted action in order to identify and promote the implementation of policies and programmes seeking to:

(a) Harness, utilize and develop the collective capabilities of the Caribbean region to achieve sustained cultural, social, scientific and technological advancement;

(b) Develop the potential of the Caribbean Sea through interaction among Member States and with third parties;

(c) Promote an enhanced economic space for trade and investment with opportunities for cooperation and concerted action, in order to increase the benefits which accrue to the peoples of the Caribbean from their resources and assets, including the Caribbean Sea;

(d) Establish, consolidate and augment, as appropriate, institutional structures and cooperative arrangements responsive to the various cultural identities, developmental needs and normative systems within the region.

For the purpose of achieving these aims, ACS promotes among its members the following activities:

(a) Economic integration, including the liberalization of trade, investment, transportation and other related areas;

(b) Discussion on matters of common interest for the purpose of facilitating active and coordinated participation of the region in the various multilateral forums;

(c) Formation and implementation of policies and programmes for functional cooperation in the above-mentioned fields;

(d) Preservation of the environment and the conservation of natural resources of the region and especially the Caribbean Sea;

(e) Strengthening of friendly relationships among Governments and peoples of the Caribbean;

(f) Consultation, cooperation and concerted action in such other areas as may be agreed upon.

In August 1995 the first summit of heads of State and Government of ACS was held at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted at this meeting identified three sectors, tourism, trade and transport, as key areas for the creation of a more viable economic space and the advancement of the integration process in the Caribbean.

Since then the Ministerial Council, permanent organ of ACS, has, for the purpose of furthering the achievement of the aims of ACS, held three ordinary meetings. They have taken place, in December 1995, December 1996 and November 1997 at, respectively, Guatemala City, Havana and Cartagena, Colombia. The Ministerial Council has established special committees to deal with matters that include: trade and external economic relations; the protection and conservation of the environment and of the Caribbean Sea; natural resources; science, technology, health, education and culture; and tourism and transport. There has also been established a working group on natural resources under the auspices of the Committee for the Protection and Conservation of the Environment and of the Caribbean Sea.

In its endeavour to implement the Plan of Action of Tourism, Trade and Transport, the Special Committee on Tourism has formulated Principles and Strategies for the establishment of a Sustainable Tourism Zone in the Caribbean, the first zone of this type in the world; the Special Committee on Trade and External Economic Relations has begun to work on the development of an ACS information system and a payment system to promote opportunities for trade and investment among ACS member States; the technical group on transportation has outlined the basic principles, objectives and activities for the development of

an action plan for 1998, aiming at the realization of the ideal of uniting the Caribbean region by air and sea. It has also been decided to create a mechanism for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness with a view to its becoming operational in 1998, on the basis of proposals formulated by the ACS secretariat, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CERA), the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); the Special Committee on Science, Technology, Education, Health and Culture is developing a network for cooperation in areas of common interest in science and technology; and the ACS information and communication network continues to develop through the establishment of ever more fluid communication links among member States.

In order to advance the work of ACS, the ACS secretariat, headquartered in Port of Spain, has been charged with coordinating the various activities and cooperating with the founding observers of ACS as well as with other regional, hemispheric and international agencies.

As a regional organization composed of and representing 25 member States which are also Members of the United Nations, ACS is convinced that possession of observer status in the United Nations General Assembly would be extremely beneficial to it.

Accordingly, on 24 February 1998, the bureau of the Ministerial Council of ACS asked that the necessary steps be taken in order that ACS be granted observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

ANNEX II

[Original: English]

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Association of Caribbean States in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that the purposes of the Association of Caribbean States, as enunciated in the convention by which it was established, and which has been registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations, are consistent with those of the United Nations,

Considering that, accordingly, it is mutually advantageous to provide for cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Caribbean States,

Taking note of the desire of the Association of Caribbean States for the establishment of such cooperation,

1. Decides to invite the Association of Caribbean States to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to implement the present resolution.

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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 30 June 1998 from the representatives of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 13 (e) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Observer status for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in the General Assembly".

An explanatory memorandum (see annex) in support of the above request and a draft resolution (see appendix) are attached to the present letter, in accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

We further have the honour to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Mr. John H. CRIGHTON
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Ernst SUCHARIPA
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Austria to the United Nations

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/...

(Signed) M. Alex REYN
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Belgium to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Ivo ŠRÁMEK
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Czech Republic to the
United Nations

(Signed) Mrs. Marjatta RASI
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Finland to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Gerhard Walter HENZE
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Germany to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. André ERDÖS
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Hungary to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. John H. F. CAMPBELL
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Ireland to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Hisashi OWADA
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Japan to the United Nations

(Signed) Sr. Manuel TELLO
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Robert R. FOWLER
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Canada to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Jorgen BØJER
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Denmark to the United Nations

(Signed) M. Alain DEJAMMET
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of France to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Vassilis KASKARELIS
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Greece to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Gunnar PÁLSSON
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Iceland to the United Nations

(Signed) M. Francesco Paolo FULCI
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Italy to the United Nations

(Signed) M. Jean-Louis WOLZFELD
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Luxembourg to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Jan BERTELING
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Michael John POWLES
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of New Zealand to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Eugeniusz WYZNER
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Poland
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. LEE See-young
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Korea
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Hans DAHLGREN
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Sweden to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Stephen GOMERSALL
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Ole Peter KOLBY
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Norway to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. José Tadeu SOARES
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Portugal to the United Nations

(Signed) Sr. Inocencio F. ARIAS
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Spain to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Volkan VURAL
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of Turkey to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Bill RICHARDSON
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
of the United States of America
to the United Nations

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an international intergovernmental organization, based in Paris, which currently has 29 member countries. It was established by the Convention on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1960, as a successor to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, created in 1948. It has, as its aim, the promotion of policies designed to:

- Achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;

- Contribute to sound economic expansion in member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development;

- Contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis, in accordance with international obligations.

Within this broad mandate, the Organization functions essentially as a forum where countries come together to discuss critical issues, opportunities and policy options, to exchange information and to agree on coordinated or harmonized policy approaches. OECD's activities cover a broad range of areas, including economics; energy; environment; development cooperation; education, employment, labour and social affairs; food, agriculture and fisheries; financial, fiscal and enterprise affairs; public management; science, technology and industry; statistics; territorial development; trade and transport.

OECD carries out its work through some 200 specialized committees and other bodies, including the semi-autonomous Nuclear Energy Agency and Development Centre. Work is also carried out through the International Energy Agency, an autonomous body within the framework of the Organization. This work is supported by an international secretariat composed of about 1,900 staff members.

The governing body of OECD is the Council, which has authority to adopt decisions, which are legally binding on members, and recommendations, which are an expression of the political will of members to implement certain policies. Moreover, OECD has provided the framework for the negotiation of several multilateral agreements and arrangements, such as the recently concluded "Convention on combating bribery of foreign officials in international business transactions", signed also by several non-member countries.

Membership in OECD remained stable for many years, until 1994, when Mexico joined the Organization, followed by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Republic of Korea. Increasingly in recent years, non-member countries have joined with member countries in a wide variety of cooperative activities within OECD. In particular, through its "Centre for Cooperation with Non Members", the

Organization carries out a broad range of thematic, multi-country activities and programmes, such as the "Transition Economy Programme", which focuses on countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States, and the "Emerging Market Economy Forum", in which non-member participation depends upon the topic of the particular activity. It also has specific programmes of cooperation and dialogue with certain non-member countries, such as the Russian Federation and China. Moreover, a number of non-members take part in OECD committees and working parties either as observers or as full participants. The Development Centre, whose principal activities include various form of cooperation and dialogue, serves as a bridge between OECD member countries and developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In its programme of work for the coming years, OECD will focus on several major issues, such as sustainable development, development assistance, ageing populations and electronic commerce, on which an increased exchange with the United Nations General Assembly would be mutually beneficial.

Numerous United Nations agencies and bodies (such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe, International Atomic Energy Agency) participate in OECD activities, either as observers or on the basis of invitations to attend particular meetings.

OECD enjoys observer status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council as well as in UNCTAD, and has working arrangements with certain other economic bodies and organizations in the United Nations family, including the Conferences of the Parties and the Working Groups of several key United Nations Conventions and their preparatory bodies. However, the ad hoc arrangements for observing selected General Assembly sessions, particularly on environment and development, have become increasingly unworkable. The Organization considers it desirable to consolidate links between OECD and the United Nations, and that observer status in the General Assembly would be mutually beneficial.

Consequently, pursuant to a decision taken by its Council, OECD requests that it be granted observer status in the General Assembly. The observer status sought for OECD would cover all bodies within its framework.

APPENDIX

Draft United Nations General Assembly resolution

Observer status for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,

1. Decides to invite the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.